United Nations ST/IC/2003/67

Secretariat

30 December 2003

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **2004 competitive examination for Arabic interpreters**

1. The purpose of the present information circular is to invite applications from staff members of the Secretariat at the P-3 level and below who wish to take the competitive examination for Arabic interpreters in **2004**, in accordance with the provisions of ST/AI/1998/7 of 23 March 1998.

2. A competitive examination for Arabic interpreters will be held on 7 and 8 April 2004 in New York, Geneva, Vienna, Cairo and other locations, as necessary, according to the number and location of qualified candidates invited to take the examination and the availability of necessary technical equipment. The purpose of this examination is to establish a roster from which present and future vacancies for Arabic interpreters will be filled.

3. The examination is open to staff members of the United Nations at the P-3 level and below who meet the eligibility requirements, as well as to qualified external candidates. Staff members from subsidiary organs of the United Nations and staff members whose service is limited to a particular organ, fund or programme of the United Nations or special mission are considered external candidates for the purpose of this examination. Staff members who pass the examination and are selected for inclusion in the roster will be assigned to fill vacancies as they occur in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. Assignments are subject to rotation and interpreters may thereafter be called upon to serve at other duty stations according to the needs of the Organization. Interpreters are expected to serve a **minimum of five years** in a language post. The assignment of staff members of the United Nations who are successful in the examination and are selected to fill vacancies will be subject to the conditions set out in paragraphs 12 through 14 below.

4. Staff members of the Secretariat applying for the examination must:

(a) Have Arabic as their main language;[1]

* Expiration date of the present information circular: 31 December 2004 .

03-67534 (E) 020104

(b) Have a perfect command of Arabic and an excellent knowledge of English **or French**. The Board of Examiners, appointed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, requires that candidates' claims to knowledge of official languages must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files;

(c) Hold a degree or an equivalent qualification from a university or institution of equivalent status at which Arabic is the language of instruction, and have 200 days of experience as conference interpreters or 200 days of work experience in the field of translation, editing, verbatim reporting or related fields. Alternatively, candidates must hold a university degree from a recognized school of interpretation. The Board of Examiners may, at its discretion, admit a candidate graduating from a university whose principal language of instruction is other than Arabic, provided that he/she has adequate secondary educational qualifications from an establishment at which the principal language of instruction is Arabic.

5. In order to meet the Organization's need to recruit staff for language posts who will serve for a reasonable period of time before reaching retirement age, staff members who do not serve on 100-series appointments and who are over the age of 56 by the deadline for submission of applications (13 February 2004) will not be eligible to sit for the examination. There is no age limit for full-time staff members serving on 100-series appointments.

6. The requirement for a university degree or its equivalent from a university or institution of equivalent status mentioned in paragraph 4 (c) above may be waived for staff members who, in the judgement of the Board of Examiners, have adequate post-secondary educational qualifications from a university or institution of equivalent status and adequate secondary educational qualifications from an establishment at which the principal language of instruction is Arabic, in addition to five years of continuous service with the United Nations Secretariat by 31 December 1989.

7. All applications will be reviewed by the Board of Examiners. In instances where a large number of applications are received, the Board reserves the right to admit to the examination only the most qualified candidates based on a review of their qualifications that are over and above the minimum criteria set out in paragraph 4. All applicants will be notified of the Board's decision in respect of their application. Convoked candidates may be required to submit evidence of degrees and/or relevant experience prior to convocation. **The Board's decisions are final.**

8. For candidates with a perfect command of English, and with Arabic as a main language, the examination will consist of two parts:

(a) Simultaneous interpretation into Arabic from recordings of three speeches delivered in English (approximately 5 to 10 minutes per recording);

(b) Simultaneous interpretation into English from recordings of three speeches delivered in Arabic (approximately 5 to 10 minutes per recording).

9. For candidates with a perfect command of French, and with Arabic as a main language, the examination will consist of two parts:

(a) Simultaneous interpretation into Arabic from recordings of three speeches delivered in French (approximately 5 to 10 minutes per recording);

(b) Simultaneous interpretation into French from recordings of three speeches delivered in Arabic (approximately 5 to 10 minutes per recording).

10. On the basis of the results of this examination, the Board of Examiners will invite selected candidates to an interview. The Board will interview the selected candidates to assess general interest, professional experience, knowledge of the United Nations and of current events, personality, willingness to serve at any duty station, adaptability to the prevailing working conditions in the Arabic Interpretation Section and, in particular, ability to work as a member of a team. The interview is an integral part of the examination. Therefore, candidates who are invited for an interview should **not** assume that they will be offered an assignment.

11. On the basis of the overall results of the examination, the Board will recommend to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management the names of candidates who qualify for inclusion in the roster. All candidates admitted to the examination will be informed in writing of the Board's final recommendation in respect of their candidature. The Board's recommendations are **not** subject to appeal. The Board **does not** release individual scores/results.

12. Staff members selected to fill vacancies will be assigned as Arabic interpreters for a trial period of two years. Staff members at the P-1 level or below will receive a special post allowance to the P-2 level. Staff members at the P-2 and P-3 levels will be assigned at their respective levels.

13. Staff members with a special post allowance to the P-2 level and those already at the P-2 level who complete the trial period successfully and are recommended by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office of Human Resources Management will be promoted to the P-3 level. Staff members already at the P-3 level who complete the trial period successfully will be confirmed in their interpretation functions at the P-3 level. Staff members who do not complete the trial period successfully will be reassigned to posts at their previous levels and the special post allowance, if any, will be discontinued.

14. In order to service meetings of the Security Council or the General Assembly, interpreters are often called upon to work outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holidays.

15. Staff members applying for the examination should complete the attached form and submit it, **not later than 13 February 2004**, to:

2004 Competitive Examination for Arabic Interpreters
Examinations and Tests Section
Division for Organizational Development
Office of Human Resources Management
Room S-2575
United Nations Secretariat
New York, New York 10017
Fax No.: (212) 963-3683
E-mail: OHRM_exam@un.org

Applications may be sent by e-mail, fax or mail. However, since all mail addressed to offices at Headquarters undergoes a process of sterilization and radiation, mailed applications may be delayed for up to four weeks. To the extent possible, applicants are therefore strongly encouraged to submit their applications early, and preferably

by e-mail or fax. Applications that are incomplete or are received after the deadline will **not** be considered.

16. In order to ensure receipt of all applications submitted by staff members from offices away from Headquarters, these staff members are requested to return their applications directly to the Division for Organizational Development through the Chief Administrative Officer or Director of the United Nations information centre of their respective duty stations by 13 February 2004, the deadline for receipt of applications in the Division for Organizational Development, Office of Human Resources Management.

Notes

[1] "Main language" should be understood to be the language into which the candidate is best able to interpret. Candidates' claims to Arabic as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.

Application[a]

2004 competitive examination for Arabic interpreters

Index No.[b] | | | | | | |

Last name | | | | | | | | | | | | | Category | | Level | |

First name | | | | | | | | | | | | | Male | | Female | |

Date of entry on duty Month | | Year | | | | |

Type of contract _____ Expiration date _____

Department/office[c] _____ Duty station _____

Room No. _____ Tel. extension _____ Fax extension _____ E-mail _____

Have you taken this examination before? Yes | | Year | | | | | No | |

Have you taken another United Nations competitive examination? Yes | | Year | | | | | No | |

If yes, which examination(s) _____

What is your main language?[d] | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

A. Knowledge of other languages

Language	*United Nations language programme (indicate highest level and date)*	*Courses taken at other institutions (name and location)*

B. Indicate your ability in each of the languages mentioned above

Language	*Read*		*Understand*		*Speak*		*Write*	
	Easily	*Not easily*	*Easily*	*Not easily*	*Fluently*	*Not fluently*	*Easily*	*Not easily*

C. University degree or equivalent or post-secondary educational qualifications

Name of institution[c] *(include place and country)*	*Language of instruction*	*Attended (month/year)*		*Degree or equivalent*[c]	*Main field of study*
		From	*To*		

D. Secondary school qualifications

Name of institution[c] *(include place and country)*	*Language of instruction*	*Attended (month/year)*		*Certificate or equivalent*[c]	*Main field of study*
		From	*To*		

E. Describe work experience (giving dates and length of time) in conference interpretation or related fields, if any

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

I certify that the information I have provided above is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date _____ Signature _____

I have read information circular ST/IC/2003/67 and I understand that, if I am successful in the 2004 competitive examination for Arabic interpreters and recommended for inclusion in the roster, my assignment as an Arabic interpreter will be subject to my acceptance of the conditions of service indicated in paragraphs 12 through 14 of that circular.

Date _____ Signature _____

Notes

[a] Staff members applying for this examination **must complete this application form**. Proof of degrees and certificates as set out in paragraph 4 (b) of ST/IC/2003/67 will be required from all candidates who are successful in the examination prior to the interview. This application form is for staff members only, external candidates have to complete a P-11 form.

[b] Normally appears on your grounds pass, monthly salary statement and P.5 personnel action forms. If not, please contact your personnel officer to obtain your number.

[c] Staff members should indicate the department or office to which they are currently assigned, e.g., DGACM, ECE, UNCTAD, UNOG, UNOV or other (please specify).

[d] "Main language" should be understood to be the language in which the candidate is best able to work. Candidates' claims to Arabic as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.

[e] Give exact name and title in original language. Do not translate or equate.